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Hokusai In America

His Influence On American Artists

By Yojiro Kuwahara

Art Commissioner to the Japan-British Exposition (1910)

The name of Hokusai, the Japanese artist, is not unfamiliar to the American people, or at least to those Americans who take any interest in the arts of the Far East. As it was the French artists who first recognized the true merit of Poe, so it was the French artists who first paid Western tribute to Hokusai. In consequence, among Western countries, France takes the lead in the study of Hokusai, and his influence is naturally more evident in that country than anywhere else. Any one who has seen the last Salon d'Automne will have been struck with the influence of the Oriental arts which pervaded a great number of pictures exhibited. One can say, I believe, without fear of contradiction, that the impressionist school of France, is, and has been, gaining much inspiration from Chinese and Japanese artists.

According to my observations after travelling all over Europe and America, America is also not without some influence of Hokusai. I have not made any special study of the influence of this Japanese artist in America, but could not help observing some evidence of Hokusai's influence on the modern school of American painters. I have not seen many pictures by La Farge, but am quite positive that the American artist got some ideas from Hokusai—for instance, the harmony of colors and a certain detail of composition. A large collection of book illustrations by Hokusai was left by Lathrop, an artist of Brooklyn, who died a few years ago. The fact that Lathrop took such pains in collecting the book illustrations by Hokusai, shows how interested he was in the Japanese artist of the Ukiyoye, or *genre* school. And it is possible that he may have been influenced directly or indirectly by Hokusai. As for Whistler, it may not be fair to say that he has received any actual influence from Hokusai, but one can easily discern in some of his pictures traces of the influence of Hiroshigé, a disciple of Hokusai.

Apart from the artists, there are many private collectors of Hokusai, of whom Mr. Hamilton Easterfield, of Brooklyn, is one of the largest. His collection is composed principally of color prints. As for the public collections, the Boston Museum possesses the largest collection, but there are not many color prints in it. An interesting feature of the last Winter Exhibition of the National Academy of Design in New York, was that there were some pieces which suggested certain influence from Hokusai and other Japanese artists. It may be too hazardous to say that the influence of Hokusai on the works of American artists can be pointed out here and there as a tangible thing, but it cannot be denied that certain American artists of to-day are receiving suggestions from the Japanese artist, either consciously or unconsciously.

While Western art-lovers and artists are thus collecting and studying Hokusai, he seems to be rather neglected in his own country.

The Freer Art Treasures

A Gift To The People of The United States

By Berthold Laufer, Ph.d.

Dr. Laufer, prominent as an anthropologist, was born in 1874 in Cologne, Germany, and came to the United States in 1898. He has been a member of expeditions to China, Russia, and Saghalien. He is the author of Contributions to Popular Religion of Tibet, 1898; The Decorative Art of the Amur Tribes, 1902; Boas Anniversary Volume (edited) 1906; Chinese Pottery of the Han Dynasty, 1909; Romance of Tibetan Queen; Chinese Grave Sculptures; Jade, a Study in Chinese Archaeology and Religion, 1911. Also numerous papers and reviews relating to Buddhism, Tibetan literature, philology, ethnology and archaeology in English, German, and French. This paper is the address of Dr. Laufer at the Exhibition of a portion of the Freer Collection in Washington.

The history of the munificent gift to the United States of the art objects collected by Mr. Charles L. Freer of Detroit, Michigan, is briefly as follows: In 1904 Mr. Freer transmitted to the Smithsonian Institution an offer to bequeath or make present conveyance of title to his extensive art collections to the Institution or the United States Government, and to furnish the means for erecting, after his death, a suitable building to receive them. In his communication Mr. Freer explained: "These several collections include specimens of very widely separated periods of artistic development, beginning before the birth of Christ and ending today. No attempt has been made to secure specimens from unsympathetic sources, my collecting having been confined to American and Asiatic schools. My great desire has been to unite modern work with masterpieces of certain periods of high civilization harmonious in spiritual and physical suggestion, having the power to broaden aesthetic culture and the grace to elevate the human mind. These collections I desire to retain during my life for the enjoyment of students, my friends and myself, and for the further purpose of making additions and improvements from time to time. Believing that good models only should be used in artistic instruction, I wish to continue my censorship, aided by the best expert advice, and remove every undesirable article, and add in the future whatever I can obtain of like harmonious standard quality."

This generous proposition was accepted by the Board of Regents of the Institution at their annual meeting on January 24, 1906. The original collection conveyed by a deed of gift on May 5, 1906, comprised about 2,250 objects, but the additions since made have increased the number to above 4,000. Seven American artists are represented by over 1,000 examples, more than four-fifths of which are the work of James McNeill Whistler. The Oriental part of the collection consists of Chinese and Japanese paintings in screens, panels, kakemono, makimono, and albums; of pottery chiefly from Japan, Korea, China, Persia and Egypt; of Egyptian glass; and of figues, statuettes, sculpture, mirrors, boxes, etc., in bronze, stone, wood, and lacquer.—EDITOR.

We are accustomed in this country to being the recipients of large donations from public-spirited men; in fact, most of our museums owe their existence to the initiative and energy of private enterprise. But all museum men know also by experience that even the most liberal gifts, however well-meaning may have been the intention of the donor, prove at times to be a two-edged sword, as it were. Over the heritage which is coming to us through the munificence of Mr. Freer, we can all share the happy feeling that it is free from all onerous burdens, and smiles down upon us like an eternally serene sky. A man of extraordinary personality and unusual culture of mind, Mr. Freer has spent a lifetime in gathering with most critical and discriminating taste, and with an open mind for everything beautiful, the choicest treasures of American and Oriental art, covering an area geographically determined by the boundaries of the Panama and Suez Canals. His conscious, thoughtful method of collecting plainly differentiates him from all other collectors, and stamps him as the most unique collector of all our contemporaries. He has never succumbed to the siren song of a fad, or allowed himself to fall into the habit of obeying transient impulses suggested by the imitation of others. He has remained steadfast and independent, unyielding to the whims of fashion, imbued with the insight of superior wisdom, which is plainly manifest in the selection of his material. Numerous objects in this collection are of prime importance, and are veritable treasures of permanent value. All of them, even the smallest, bear some significance, and are eloquent enough to stand in their own defence. Each represents an event which we cannot pass by without admiration and a deepening of our knowledge. The last inventory of Mr. Freer relative to collections already presented to the National Gallery reveals the following figures, which it may be of interest to note:

Oil paintings, water colors, pastels, drawings and sketches by James T. McNeill Whistler, about....	250
Etchings, dry-points, and lithographs by the same, about.....	850
Oil paintings, water colors, and pastels by living American painters, over	85
The famous Peacock Room, complete with all its decorations.	
Chinese and Japanese paintings on hanging-scrolls, screens, panels, and in albums, over.....	900
Pottery, including Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Persian, Mesopotamian, and Egyptian, over.....	1,500
Chinese bronzes, over	100
Sculptures in stone and wood, lacquers, and other miscellaneous Oriental objects, over..	100
Egyptian colored glass, several hundred pieces, presumably the largest collection of its kind on record.	

The total number of these art-objects amounts to over four thousand.

Of American art I am not competent to judge. I must therefore ask indulgence in permiting me to keep within the range of my own field, or my own limitations, and to confine my attention to the Far East. It seems to me that the alliance of modern American art with Oriental is indeed a felicitous thought, and augurs of great expectations for the future of our own art. The spiritual affinity of Whistler's life-work to the sphere of Eastern painting will thus be-

come obvious to every one; and his genius, like the vanguard in a reconnoiter of unsafe territory, will doubtless help many to grasp the mysteries of the East. Whistler, we know, never had an opportunity of viewing any great works of the early Oriental painters, so that he could not be looked upon as their imitator. He was congenial to them in his feelings and in his manner of lending expression to them; he saw the world through their eyes, he felt with their hearts, and gave utterance to his temperament in like manner; like-natured, he could but arrive at related impressions and results. His "peacock room" decorations suggest the gold-leaf screens of Koyetsu; and the purity and strength of line achieved by Li Lung-mien has been paralleled only by him. His portrait of Leyland, and Wu Toa-tse's portrait of the Shu-Han Emperor, I venture to think, are convergent forces, actuated, as it were, by a sort of wireless communication.

In order to appreciate Mr. Freer's aspirations in the field of Oriental art, it may not be amiss to glance back at our former relations to the East, because we shall then be in a position to understand fully the triumphant novelty cropping out from this department of the collection.

The acquaintance of the Western world with Far Eastern art now embraces a period of nearly three centuries, and it is remarkable how considerably our views and estimation of Oriental productions have changed during this brief span of time. It was first through their tea, wall-paper, and porcelain—and with them a certain wealth of decorative motives—that China and Japan entered on the horizon of Europe; and our domestic art of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is characterized by that imitative tendency known as *chinoiseries,* which seems to have exerted a perceptible influence on the style of the Rococo. Chinese taste, in the way of eccentric pagodas, kiosks, bridges, and trees artificially trimmed and dwarfed, then dominated the French and English garden scenery. Yet all this was not real Chinese art, but merely the remnants of a decadent phase of it grossly distorted through misinterpretation in Europe.

In the latter part of the last century the interest in Japanese color-prints and netsuke awoke, and aroused unbounded enthusiasm, nay, grew into a religious cult. Hokusai was then enthroned as the prophet of a new art; and the Ukiyoye school, the mere outcome of the last two centuries, was hailed as the most ideal expression ever attained by the art of the East. Other collectors turned their eyes toward China, and revelled in the dream that gayly-decorated porcelains, pretentious cloisonné vases, dazzling embroideries, carved lacquer-ware, colored-glass snuff-bottles, or dainty jade ornaments, formed the essential constituents of Chinese art. Yet all this is not Chinese art. Now we know only too well that all these trinkets, however praiseworthy their technical merits may be, bear no organic relation to the real genius of artistic China, but are simply routine-work, art-industrial productions denoting the very last offshot in the cycle of a long development. This conviction has slowly but surely been gaining ground for two decades or so, though still confined to the initiated few, while the majority of people remain misguided in their conception of Eastern art.

Ten years ago we were greatly stirred up over a specimen antedating by but a very short period the Manchu Dynasty; and anything labelled "Ming period" was pointed out as an affair of grave consequence, sufficient to warrant a shower of congratulations upon the fortunate collector. At the present time our blood has cooled off, in our feeling toward the Ming, to almost the same low temperature as is felt for the Ts'ing, for we are sensible of the fact that both are epigones and traditionalists living on the débris of a former glory. The most dangerous fuel added to the general prejudice in favor of this retrospective art was doubtless the fat spoils obtained from the imperial palaces, which poured in after the destruction of the Summer Palace in 1860, and the reckless loots of 1900. The label "palace piece" fascinated collectors with such hypnotizing force, that the most barbarous taste, aiming for pompous lime-light effects, could be passed off as real art. There is many a single and simple painting in the Freer Collection for which I would gladly sacrifice the host of palace treasures from all the European and American collections taken together. The seemingly brilliant output of the imperial factories for the household of the sovereign, naturally, is not an index of national art and sentiment; on the contrary, it may be, and in most cases will be, totally foreign to the feeling of the people, and even in strong contrast to the true artistic genius of the nation. To get at the spirit of Chinese art, we must draw from the fountain-head of purer sources. Porcelain now appears to us such a recent affair, that the archæologist will take, if any, but a passing notice of it. The early ceramic productions of the Chou and Han Dynasties have risen from their graves, and tell us a vivid story of the life of bygone ages. The golden age of bronze passed through the two millenniums preceding our era; and we have also the early stone sculpture chiseled during the first centuries under the inspiration of Buddhist tradition. And now, foremost of all, we are privileged to greet face to face many of the venerable ancient masters of the early epochs of painting. This is the sanctum, the true mirror, of Chinese art; in it the innermost life and soul of the people of China are reflected; and if we are but eager to understand them, here is given the primary foundation for our research. Mr. Freer shares the glory of the first discoverers of this new land. He has brought together with untiring zeal so many living witnesses of the great early era of Chinese art, that he fully deserves the honor of being called the most successful collector of ancient Chinese scrolls of their home.

It is this prominent characteristic of the Freer Collection which I would impress upon your minds. What constitutes one of the chief merits of his activity is the fact that he was the first great collector to make a concise and clear distinction between two things—the industrial art and the liberal arts of the Orient, which are sadly confounded in all our art museums as well as in our literature on the subject. We are therefore indebted to Mr. Freer not only for what his museum contains, but just as much for what is brilliantly conspicuous there by its absence, having been wisely banished from it; such as decorated porcelains, cloisonnés, ivories, bric-à-brac, sword-guards, color-prints—in short all that goes to make up the Oriental curio-shop, and is dear to the heart of the traveller and the amateur collector. But Mr.

Freer has discovered still another, more significant supreme truth. Owing to his long-continued research, in which he gradually penetrated into the distant ages of China, intent on acquiring only specimens of the highest beauty and of authentic character, he recognized that ancient Chinese painting is the primary source of Japanese, and in its climax far superior to that of its younger sister. For this reason he finally concentrated his energies more and more on gathering the oldest attainable records of the Chinese brush; and in number and quality of these early works, the Freer Collection will probably stand unrivalled in America and Europe. Here we are allowed to enjoy scrolls which formerly graced the famous gallery of the Sung emperors of mediæval times, indorsed by the sovereign's jade seal, and backed by lengthy certificates of coeval experts, others from the great collection of the Emperor K'ien-lung. Several were obtained by Mr. Freer directly from princesses of the imperial house or from private collectors and connoisseurs.

It should not be supposed that at present anything like a well-established science of Chinese art exists among us; on the contrary, our actual knowledge of this vast subject is meagre and unsatisfactory. Everything is in a state of uncertainty and fluctuation; and absorbing research-work will be necessary to reach conclusions worthy of serious consideration. In the domain of painting, biographical notices of several hundred artists, translated from Chinese sources, are placed at our disposal; but a perusal of those which are appended to the Catalogue of the Freer Collection will convince you that such notes, while embodying interesting information, leave a blank in those lines which to us are of paramount importance in the artist—his soul and aspirations. Only a profound study of their works will tend to clarify our opinions. Just as the contents of art and its development in the East are different, so also will the methods to be pursued in its investigation necessarily be much at variance with those established by our traditions. Our habitual notions of original and copy, of school and tradition, of master and pupil, of style and coloring, of signature and seal, are all factors moving on another line of thought in the East. Poetry, music, and painting are so intimately interrelated and interwoven there, as parallel emanations of the national soul, that only the united forces of these phenomena bid fair to get at the true Chinese spirit. We are thus confronted with a manifold complexity of problems to be coped with only by the scrutinizing search-light of a psychological analysis. In its mental aspect Chinese art is virtually incarnated psychology, and offers the most stupendous monuments contributed by the Chinese to their own psychology. Coupled with this phase of the problem are the technical and mechanical conditions of this art, which remain important questions for solution, and assuredly none the less attractive. The secret of Eastern painting lies not only in its poetic sentiment, its æsthetic vigor, its observational power of life and motion, and its emotional force, but also in the eminent training of the hand, that astounding manual dexterity which has elicited the admiration of all observers, in the agility and versatility of the brush so largely responsible for all this pure-line drawing, in the power of the liquid colors, in the soft flow of the papers and silks, and in the general working methods.

Most Chinese paintings are accompanied by inscriptions, introductions, or postscripts, a piece of poetry inspiring or inspired by the landscape, testimonials of collectors and art critics, and numerous seals. The reading and understanding of this literary by-play is fraught with no small difficulties, and is quite a science in itself, not merely for the foreign inquirer, but also for the native scholar. The authentic material offered us in the Freer Collection is eminently fertile in stimulating questions of vital issue. Can we prove that the papers and silks used in the scrolls attributed to the T'ang Dynasty were actually made at that far-off period? Did the wonderfully preserved paints of these pictures differ, and in what respect, from those of the Sung and Ming? What is the quality of the evidence on which the assumption of this great age is based? Is tradition always correct in assigning a work to such and such a particular painter or school? Is this or that signature contemporaneous, or possibly a later addition? Such and similar considerations will convince you of the intrinsic scientific value of the Freer Collection, from which a decided advance in the increase of our knowledge may be confidently expected. For the present we have the pleasure of expressing our satisfaction at the possession of so many precious gems, which contribute so much to the widening of our experience and to the deepening of our æsthetic enjoyment.

Allow me now to call your attention, with a few comments, to some individual pictures in this unique collection. The painting of Chou Fang (No. 88) representing the philosopher Lao-tse, the founder of Taoism, is an artistic and historical document of utmost importance, as it is the only real portrait in existence of the greatest thinker of China, with a powerful expression of spirituality. You are all familiar with the conventional representations of Lao-tse inspired by popular Taoism for the needs of its adherents; an old man holding a book-roll and sitting astride a water-buffalo, symbolizing the way in which tradition makes him leave forever the soil of his country. This conception, however, as stated in the attached legend, breathes "the style and simplicty of antiquity." The sage absorbed in deep meditation is sitting on a rug playing the lute wth ivory plectra slipped over his fingers. The treatment of the folds and lines of his costume is, in the inscription, likened to "ironware," i.e., a fancy name for this peculiar style of drawing, a feature traced back to a certain painting of the poet-painter Wang Wei, one of the leading spirits of the T'ang epoch. The objects freely arranged on and around the carpet show the predilection of this period for transparent vessels which may be either glass or jade; a scroll, e.g., is displayed in such a way that it becomes visible through a silk-gauze fan, and a coral sceptre is reflected through a bluish glass jar. The same technique is happily applied to the beautiful flower still-life of Yen Li-pên, whose opaque enamel-like pigments are of unusual brilliancy and effect.

All these objects as well as the books and paper rolls associated with Lao-tse are certainly anachronisms, but a Chinese artist does not strive for historical, only for inward truth. It is an interesting fact that in the official Catalogue of the Gallery of the Sung emperors, published in 1120, a painting of Lao-tse by this artist is listed, and I think it is quite possible that the present picture is identical with the one that adorned the pal-

ace of the Sung rulers. The inscriptions were added in more recent times.

For another reason, this painter is of great historical interest. It is on record that a commission sent by the Korean kingdom Sinra arrived at Ch'ang-an during his lifetime and brought up a number of his works which were transmitted to Korea. In view of the fact that from there Japan received an impetus for painting, it is very likely that Chou Fang exerted a certain influence on the shaping of Japanese art.

There are two Buddhist paintings in the Freer collection which are not only of a highly artistic value but also monuments of paramount importance for the history of religion.

The conception of diety Kuan-yin or Avalokiteçvara as fisherman with the underlying idea of a saviour is of intense interest, as it strongly savors of Christian influence. It is most striking to encounter this subject in Buddhism, because the catching of fish is contradictory to the Buddhistic tenet of the sacredness of all life and a sinful occupation. Christ is represented as a fisherman, as he promises his apostles that they shall be fishers of men, i.e., Christ the Saviour. A remarkable coincidence it is that in the later writings of Mahayana Buddhism the Bodhisatva is spoken of as a fisherman who catches men like fishes, drawing them out of the ocean of Samsara into the light of salvation. This allegory accounts for the strange fact that there are pictures of Buddha with rod and hook in the attitude of fishing—a highly un-Buddhistic act. I am inclined to think that the Christian symbol of the fish was here adopted by Buddhism.

One of these pictures (No. 66) is believed to go back to the beginning of the sixth century, probably the earliest in date in the collection. It was long preserved as a relic in one of the temples on the West Lake (Si hu) near Hangchow, famed for the beauty of its scenery and its numerous legends. According to a lengthy testimonial written on the scroll, it contains "genuine traces" of the brush of Shang Sêng-yu, i.e. the nucleus, the fundamental work is from the hands of the great painter himself. There we see a walking Kuan-yin in the disguise of a fisherwoman, holding a basket with a goldfish instinct with a realism of life. The face is enlivened by a more naturalistic flesh-color than we are wont to observe in any other Chinese painting, and the posture and movement of the whole figure is remarkable.

The other painting (No. 57) is a copy, presumably of the twelfth century, made after a work of Wu Tao-tse, whom the Japanese call Godoshi, generally judged as the greatest painter by Chinese and Japanese critics alike, and honored with the title "the inspired sage of painting." It is evident that Wu Tao-tse drew his inspiration from his predecessor, and it is essential that we here have a favorable opportunity of studying the interdependence of these two artists,—a fact which was hitherto known to us from literary records only. In this Avalokitecvara, the ancient Gandhara type of the Bodhisatva with mustache, is faithfully preserved. Fenollosa designated this picture as one of the grandest and profoundest creations of all time.

We have the good fortune to see Wu Tao-tse further represented here by a copy, a masterly work of portraiture

(No. 62), the portrait of the Emperor Chao-lieh. The subject is intended to convey more than the particular emperor for which the picture is named; this bold figure stands for a typical national hero who was a forcible character of ancient history, the founder of a new dynasty in 221 A.D. The chronicler of the period thus sums up his verdict upon him. "He was a great man, bold and liberal. Gifted with deep penetration and always considerate to men of talent, he possessed all the qualifications that go to make the founder of an empire." His personal appearance is said to have been extraordinary; he was seven feet five inches in height; he could see behind his back; his ears reached to his shoulders, and his hands to his knees. He was a self-made man; on his father's death, he was forced as a boy to eke out a meagre living by making straw shoes and mats; without love for books, he grew into a sportsman fond of horses and dogs. Looking at the strength of this face, we can readily believe the story that once, while in the capacity of a magistrate, he became so much provoked by the behavior of a corrupt inspector that he gave the man a severe beating and left him tied to a post, with the magisterial seal hung round his neck. Wu Tao-tse doubtless made a powerful character study of this favorite hero, and I believe no better work in Chinese portrayal is known.

The magnificent snow landscape, in the style of the school of Wang Wei, bears the name of Chao-tao, i.e., Li Chao-tao, the son of the famous Li Se-sün, the originator of the Northern School. This name is, of course, not the signature of the artist, as the custom of signing a painting was not yet observed in the T'ang period, but merely testifies to a certain tradition or lends color to the opinion of Chinese experts who are inclined to assign this painting to Li Chao-tao. But the spirit of Wang Wei who was the most successful snow-landscapist of China, is quite apparent in this painting, as we may judge from a comparison of it with a snow-scene copied after Wang Wei by Wang Shi-ku, a reputed artist of the seventeenth century. In the grandeur of its subject and in plasticity of design, this picture is certainly unique and will maintain a worthy place in the universal history of art.

The gem of the whole collection, in my estimation, is the long landscape roll of Li Se-sün (No. 73), which is a symphonic composition on the grandest scale, unlimited in its space and in its scope. It is the epic narrative of a magnificent mountain scenery conceived of as one of the Fortunate Isles, the Abode of the Blest who live, through all the delights of nature, clad only with tree-leaves, the lives of contented hermits in caves. And more than this, it is the self-confession of a deeply religious mind craving the beauty of the beyond in the final flight of his soul liberated and taken heavenward by the wings of a crane. The Taoist yearning for immortality, the keynote of all Eastern religious thought, celebrates a triumph in this *Missa solemnis*. This artist, no doubt, was a genius and a most powerful colorist; he is famous as the inventor of a new color style (*kin pi*), outlining mountains in gold and bordering the gold lines with a bright green. For the first time we have an apportunity of studying this technique hitherto known to us merely from literary records in this memorable painting which, besides,

is the best authenticated ancient Chinese scroll in existence. Eight hundred years ago, it had a place in the picture-gallery of the Sung emperors and is fully endorsed by the imperial commission of experts headed by the names of the most talented painters of this period.

As the Freer collection is the first to open our eyes to the greatest T'ang masters none of whom I understand is represented in any other of our museums, so it takes also the lead in the works of the finest of all Sung painters, Li Lung-mien, and will, in all likelihood, definitely settle many problems connected with his history. Heretofore it was assumed by many that no original by this artist was any longer preserved in China, and that we had to look to Japan as the only place where any of his works are to be found. Later copies modeled after this artist are very numerous, and under the Mongol Yüan dynasty following the Sung quite a school working in Li Lung-mien's seems to have arisen. There are technical conditions and superior qualities in Mr. Freer's works of this painter which will render them fit as a basis for serious research. Though no definite verdict can be pronounced, till a thorough detailed investigation is placed on record, I venture to predict that many rolls of Mr. Freer will prove to be incontrovertibly authentic and contemporaneous masterpieces of this great painter.

Fenollosa prophesied that American art of fifty years hence would take enormous leaps under the stimulus of Mr. Freer's Oriental masterpieces. What, then, is the chief merit of Chinese art on which such a claim is founded?

The greatness of Chinese art rests on its simplicity and truthfulness. It is true in its personal truth, in its attempt to speak only the artist's inward experience in a language of straightforward eloquence. It is, in other words, built up on a purely emotional basis which seems to be the main current of real art. The message conveyed to us by Chinese art may be explained by the negative formula that the East is free from all those scientific axioms in which our art is embedded. All those technicalities to which we are accustomed by school-traditions, to associate with art, as the laws of anatomy, perspective, background, plasticity effected by heights and shadowing, regard to atmospheric conditions, in short natural truth, are worthless to the Eastern artist for deep-rooted psychological reasons, because their adoption would mar the logic of his poetic imagination, because it would mean suicide to the intentions of his art and his innermost self.

He is not interested in the mere form or outward appearance of a flower or an animal, but in their motions and actions, in the spirituality pervading the life of all creation. Like Schopenhauer he conceives the world as will and mind-perception, and has, by mere intuition and feeling, awakened to the truth that life is nature's most beautiful invention. To him, art is more than mere art, it is part of his religion, a form of his worship, a means of his salvation. In our endeavor to appreciate the painting of the East, we must not compare it with our pictorial art, but with our music. Indeed they have handled the brush with tremendous inner resources, as we handle music for the purpose of lending expression to fine and noble sentiments. In vain should we look in the Orient for a Raphael or Velasquez, a Rembrandt or Rubens, but you will discover there the

sublimity of a Bach, Mozart's serene grace and beauty, the Adagios of Beethoven's symphonies, the romantic character pieces of a Schumann or Grieg, and even the Hungarian rhapsodies of a Liszt.

The war-cry of natural truth in our art certainly is not an artistic but a purely artificial scientific principle resulting from the rapid growth and overwhelming influence of science. The blending of physical laws with the theory and practice of art, however, seems to be a procedure of dubious success.

The Eastern world has always upheld the standards of pure imaginative and idealistic art in that art should only be a microcosm of human sentiments expressed by the greatest possible simplicity and candor of quaint grace and taste. The effect of this art proves its theory correct, for it is an art of happy optimism preaching the joy of life and nature and impressing these feelings on the minds of others; it is free from all morbid pessimism and pale-faced philosophy. Here, the educational value of Chinese art comes in, and we should not hesitate to profit by this great lesson. Too long we have been hypnotized into allowing science a tutorship over art, and the question may even be raised whether we are not prone to attribute to science altogether too vast importance for our life. Not only art but even the daily movements of our existence we try to make "scientific," much to the detriment of our personal happiness. The artist should have the courage to forswear this fetish and become as "unscientific" as possible. And in this attempt he may safely adopt as guides the great masters of China and Japan who were not hampered by an excess baggage of scientific machinery. The East has a mission to fulfill and a new gospel to preach. No greater honor could be rendered to the farsighted founder of this Museum than by continued pilgrimages of our artists to this new Mecca of Oriental art, to imbibe with open eyes the glad tidings.

SMITHSONIAN
INSTITUTION
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Excerpt from Address on the Freer Collection

by

Berthold Laufer.

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"The painting of Chou Fang, (No.88) representing the philosopher Lao-tse, the founder of Taoism, is an artistic and historical document of utmost importance, as it is the onlyideal portrait in existence of the great thinker of China with a powerful expression of spirituality. You are all familiar with the conventional representations of Lao-tse inspired by popular Taoism for the needs of its adherents; an old man holding a book-roll and sitting astride a water-buffalo, - symbolizing the way in which tradition makes him leave forever the soil of his country. This conception, however, as stated in the attached legend, breathes "the style and simplicity of antiquity". The sage absorbed in deep meditation is sitting on a rug playing the lute with ivory plectra slipped over his fingers. The treatment of the folds and lines of his costume is, in the inscription, likened to "ironwire", i. e. a fancy name for this peculiar style of drawing, a feature traced back to a certain painting of the poet-painter Wang Wei, one of the leading spirits of the Tang epoch. The objects freely arranged on and around the carpet show the predilection of this period for transparent vessels which may be either glass or jade; a scroll, e.g. is displayed in such a way that it becomes visible through a silk-gauze fan, and a coral sceptre is reflected through a bluish glass jar. The same technique is happily applied to the beautiful flower still-life of Yen Li-pen whose opaque enamel-like pigments are of unusual brilliancy and effect.

All these objects as well as the books and paper rolls associated with Lao-tse, are certainly anachronisms, but a Chinese artist does not strive for historical, only for inward truth. It is an interesting fact that in the official catalogue of the Gallery of the Sung emperors, published in 1120, a painting of Lao-tse by this artist is listed, and I think it is quite possible that the present picture is identical with the one that adorned the palace of the Sung rulers. The inscriptions were added in more recent times.

For another reason, this painter is of great historical interest. It is on record that a commission sent by the Korean kingdom Sinra arrived at Ch'ang-an during his lifetime and bought up a number of his works which were transmitted to Korea. In view of the fact that from there Japan received an impetus for painting, it is very likely that Chou Fang exerted a certain influence on the shaping of Japanese art,

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"The gem of the whole collection, in my estimation, is the long landscape roll of Li Se-sün, No. 73, which is a symphonic composition on the grandest scale, unlimited in its space and in its scope. It is the epic narrative of a magnificient mountain scenery conceived of as one of the Fortunate Isles, the Abode of the Blest who live, through all the delights of nature, clad only with tree-leaves, the lives of contented hermits in caves. And more than this, it is the self-confession of a deeply religious mind craving the beauty of the beyond in the final flight of his soul liberated and taken heavenward by the wings of a crane. The Taoist yearning for immortality, the keynote of all Eastern religious thought, celebrates a triumph in this Missa solemnis.

This artist, no doubt, was a genius and a most powerful colorist; he is famous as the inventor of a new color style (kin pi), outlining mountains in gold and bordering the gold lines with a bright green. For the first time we have an opportunity of studying this technique hitherto known to us merely from literary records in this memorable painting which, besides, is the best authenticated ancient Chinese scroll in existence. Eight hundred years ago, it had a place in the Picture-gallery of the Sung emperors and is fully endorsed by the imperial commission of experts headed by the names of the most talented painters of this period."

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